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**Letter dated 7 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative
of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

In my capacity as Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries, I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the annual ministerial meeting of the least developed countries, held in New York on 1 October 2015 (see annex).

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I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 (a) and (b), 23 (a), 24 (a), 25 and 26.

(Signed) Abulkalam Abdul **Momen**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 7 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries, New York, 1 October 2015

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the least developed countries, having met in New York on 1 October 2015 to provide strategic guidance for the full, effective and timely implementation of the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2011-2020, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, which calls upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to integrating and implementing the Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action to overcome the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/35 of 23 July 2015 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Welcoming with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,¹

Taking note of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July 2015,

Taking note also of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015,

We congratulate the United Nations on its seventieth anniversary and, while taking note of its many achievements, we reaffirm our commitment to its relevance and importance and look forward to its continued and further strengthened support to the least developed countries in addressing their development challenges and priorities;

1. We reiterate our firm commitment to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including by integrating its provisions into our national policies and development frameworks and conducting regular reviews with the full involvement of all key stakeholders;

2. We express our serious concern that the global economy has been facing a challenging time for several years now with high volatility in macroeconomic and

¹ A/70/83-E/2015/75.

financial conditions, and the impact of global economic and financial crises have had serious adverse effects on the economic performance of the least developed countries, as evidenced by a substantial deceleration of their recent growth rate compared with the progress made during the past decade, with serious effects on the timely and effective implementation of the goals and targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action;

3. We recognize with deep concern that the least developed countries are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change due to their location, low income, low institutional capacity and greater reliance on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture. We are deeply worried that increases in global temperature, sea level rise, ocean acidification and other climate change impacts are seriously affecting coastal areas and low-lying coastal least developed countries. We express our grave concern at the lack of progress in the current climate change negotiations and urge all parties to conclude the negotiations, with developed countries taking the lead to ambitiously cut greenhouse gas emissions and provide adequate, predictable and additional financial and technological resources to the least developed countries. We look forward to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in France in 2015, which should result in an ambitious outcome both in terms of mitigation, adaptation and financing. In this regard, we strongly call for the 2015 Paris climate agreement to:

- (a) be legally binding;
- (b) limit global average temperature increase to well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;
- (c) reflect legal parity between the mitigation and adaptation aspects of the global response to climate change;
- (d) agree on the full, effective and timely operationalization of the Green Climate Fund;
- (e) provide for the replenishment of the Least Developed Countries Fund to ensure direct, predictable and sufficient funds to address adaptation needs of the least developed countries;
- (f) establish explicit provisions that ensure that the strongest possible efforts will be made to achieve and continuously enhance national and global mitigation action;
- (g) anchor loss and damage as a stand-alone element that is separate and distinct from adaptation in the 2015 Paris climate change agreement;

4. Desertification, land degradation, drought, floods, including glacial lakes outburst floods, cyclones and coastal erosion driven by sea level rise, salinization and other natural disasters are major obstacles for the least developed countries to achieve sustainable development. There should be enhanced financial and technological support from the development partners, development banks and the Global Environment Facility to address desertification, soil infertility, droughts, floods, coastal erosion and salinization and to secure a land-degradation-neutral world;

5. We recognize that the least developed countries represent an enormous human and natural resource potential for world economic growth, welfare,

prosperity and food and energy security. Therefore, a successful, renewed and strengthened global partnership that effectively addresses the special needs of the least developed countries will contribute to the cause of peace, prosperity and sustainable development for all. Further strengthening our collective actions towards enabling the young populations and women of the least developed countries will more effectively contribute to equitable and inclusive development, poverty eradication, job creation and social justice;

6. The demographic transition is key to building human capital and harnessing the demographic dividend. To this end, there should be strengthened collective efforts by the least developed countries and their development partners to realize the demographic dividend in the least developed countries by pursuing effective policies and actions on education, training, employment, primary health, including voluntary family planning, girls' and women's empowerment, gender equality and issues of development related to youth;

7. We underline the need for building productive capacity and structural transformation in the least developed countries as a means for increasing economic, environmental and social development and building resilience against shocks and vulnerabilities. In this regard, we stress that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development opens up new opportunities to scale up the structural transformation of the least developed countries, accelerating growth and fostering inclusive development, including by employment generation and poverty eradication;

8. We emphasize that the development of physical infrastructure is an important prerequisite for sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and significant amounts of investment and technology are essential, including through public-private partnerships, innovative financing, regional integration and appropriate institutions and regulation, to bridge the existing savings-investment gap in the least developed countries. In this regard, we will strengthen the underlying investment climate, with enhanced support of the development partners and international financial institutions, including by improving predictability, governance and transparency, as well as in procurement practices and policies. We call upon the development partners to provide enhanced financial and technical support to the least developed countries for their infrastructure development and management. We look forward to the establishment and effective functioning of a new multi-stakeholder forum to bridge the infrastructure gap, which should give special priority to the needs and challenges of the least developed countries;

9. We recognize that agriculture, food and nutritional security and rural development are vitally important for the least developed countries. Agriculture plays a crucial role both in promoting food security and as the major economic activity for much of the population, with direct linkages to the eradication of poverty and hunger, rural development and gender equality and empowerment of women, as well as exports, commodity and production diversification and agro-processing capacity. We therefore underline the need for adequate investment in physical infrastructure, scientific and technological development, research and agricultural extension services in the least developed countries. We recognize that commodity diversification and value addition as well as the effective participation of the least developed countries in regional and global value chains by upgrading and increasing the domestic value-added and technology content of their products are vitally important so that they can gain the maximum benefit from their agricultural products;

10. We note with concern that the efforts made by the least developed countries towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals only made limited progress due to a variety of internal and external factors, namely, limited productive capacity, various kinds of shocks and crises, unmet official development assistance commitments, growing debt burden, unfavourable market access conditions, and inadequate foreign direct investment inflows, among others;

11. We reaffirm our rejection of unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that impede economic and social development in the least developed countries;

12. We welcome the agenda, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", adopted by consensus at the summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015.² We also welcome the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 17 July 2015 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015.³ We are happy to note that these new development agendas put in place a number of key development challenges and priorities of the least developed countries at their front and centre;

13. We are convinced that a business as usual approach will clearly be insufficient to achieve the ambitions of the global Sustainable Development Goals by the least developed countries and these countries would need additional, preferential, concessional and most favourable treatment for their access to markets, finance, technologies, know-how and other resources and differential and flexible treatment in undertaking international commitments and obligations known as "differential and preferential treatment for the least developed countries";

14. We recognize that the least developed countries would need a substantial amount of additional resources to achieve accelerated progress in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to reach the stage of graduation. We will make our best efforts to effectively mobilize domestic resources, use them efficiently, build up financial infrastructure and capacities, and put in place appropriate regulatory measures and institutions. We are however, concerned that there is a limited scope to meet the multiple development finance requirements of the least developed countries with their narrow economic bases, widespread poverty and underdeveloped private sector. We therefore, need significantly scaled up international support including through official development assistance, trade, debt relief, foreign direct investment, migration and technology transfer;

15. We call upon the development partners to enhance their support to the least developed countries to ensure that they are not bypassed in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

16. We reiterate that official development assistance continues to be the largest and a critical source of external financing for the development of the least developed countries and that it provides a buffer to weather the impacts of the

² See General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

³ See General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

unstable and volatile global economic environment. We have shared serious concern over the fall in official development assistance to the least developed countries by 15 per cent in 2014 and welcome the commitment of Member States to reversing this decline.³ We welcome the decision by the European Union, which reaffirms its collective commitment to achieve the 0.7 per cent of the official development assistance/gross national income target within the time frame of the post-2015 agenda, and undertakes to meet collectively the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of official development assistance/gross national income to least developed countries in the short term and to reach 0.20 per cent of official development assistance/gross national income to least developed countries within the time frame of the post-2015 agenda.³ We also welcome the provisions of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that encourage official development assistance providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of official development assistance/gross national income to least developed countries and express encouragement to those who are allocating at least 50 per cent of their official development assistance to least developed countries. These are some qualitative and quantitative changes in the decades-long target on official development assistance for the least developed countries. We call upon all development partners to fulfil these targets;

17. We reiterate our call upon the donor countries to provide 0.20 per cent of their gross national income to the least developed countries by 2020 and 0.25 per cent of their gross national income by 2030 or at least 50 per cent of net official development assistance to the least developed countries;

18. We underline that the allocation of global official development assistance resources should take into account the structural handicaps and constraints which are unique to the least developed countries. We call upon development partners to ensure a right balance in the allocation of official development assistance among various sectors with particular focus on productive sectors, including infrastructure, agriculture and information and communications technology;

19. We stress the need for enhancing the quality of aid, including through transparency, accountability, long-term predictability and untying of aid for the least developed countries. We further emphasize that official development assistance should be channelled through a national budgetary system and should be aligned with national priorities based on the principle of national ownership and leadership in the development process;

20. We welcome the targets contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development related to migration and remittances and strongly urge partner countries to start taking action, specifically with respect to reducing to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances by 2030 and eliminating remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent, and to facilitate the orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies;

21. We recognize the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. We also recognize that international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses. We underline the urgent need to cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants, regardless of migration status, refugees and

displaced persons at their countries of origin, transit and destination. Such cooperation should also strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees, particularly in developing countries. We underline the right of migrants to return to their country of citizenship, and recall that States must ensure that their returning nationals are duly received;

22. We call upon the development partners to operationalize fully and in a timely manner the Green Climate Fund, with the goals of mobilizing \$100 billion per year by 2020, the promotion and facilitation of clean development mechanism projects in the least developed countries and addressing the needs of people displaced as a result of extreme weather events. We stress that the allocation of adaptation and mitigation funds should be additional to official development assistance commitments and should be fair, equitable and proportionate to the impact of climate change;

23. We welcome the decision of the Board of the Green Climate Fund to aim for a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation, over time on a grant equivalent basis, and to aim for a floor of 50 per cent of the adaptation allocation for particularly vulnerable countries, in particular the least developed countries. We call upon the international community to simplify the procedures for gaining access to all available climate finance;

24. We call upon the international community to promote needs-based and effective mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in the least developed countries, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities, taking into account their specific vulnerabilities and their difficulties in accessing available funding facilities for climate change adaptation, promotion of clean development and low-carbon economy;

25. We recognize that the income-based classifications of countries are becoming less and less relevant and unable to take into account fragility and other structural constraints, while the least developed countries represent the most homogenous group of countries with very few variations. We therefore, stress that the least developed country category should be universally recognized to facilitate a coordinated and coherent follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of progress made in these countries. We invite the General Assembly to undertake necessary measures in this regard during its seventieth session;

26. We invite the World Bank Group to enhance its financial and technical support, through the seventeenth replenishment of the International Development Association, for infrastructure and productive capacity-building as well as adaptation- and resilience-building of all least developed countries;

27. We recognize that while official development assistance must remain central and play a catalytic role, there is a need to tap additional resources, including through innovative financing mechanisms which can provide more stable and predictable resources for development and are based on new partnerships between countries at different levels of development and public and private actors. Specific mechanisms should be suggested and operationalized to mobilize additional resources for financing sustainable development. We stress that the innovative sources of financing should be additional, substantial and predictable and

disbursed in a manner that respects the priorities and special needs of the least developed countries and does not unduly burden them;

28. We underline the need to ensure that the interests of the least developed countries are given due priority in the future work of the World Trade Organization. We take note of the decisions taken by members of the World Trade Organization at the Ninth Ministerial Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 6 December 2013, in particular the decisions on duty-free and quota-free market access for least developed countries,⁴ preferential rules of origin for least developed countries⁵ and operationalization of the waiver concerning preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of least developed countries,⁶ as well as the agreement on trade facilitation.⁷ While noting the progress made since the Bali conference in all these areas, we underline the need for full realization of the World Trade Organization Bali package for the least developed countries. We look forward to the successful outcome of the Tenth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, which will take place from 15 to 18 December 2015 in Nairobi;

29. We welcome the decision of the Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights of 11 June 2013 on the extension of the transition period under article 66.1 for least developed country members until 1 July 2021, which will allow the least developed countries more time to implement the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, while making full use of flexibilities provided by the Agreement.⁸ We also request the members of the World Trade Organization to extend the transitional period under article 66.1 of the Agreement for least developed country members with respect to pharmaceutical products and for waivers from the obligations of articles 70.8 and 70.9 of the Agreement for as long as the member remains a least developed country;⁹

30. We welcome the initiatives taken by some countries in providing duty-free and quota-free market access to all products from all the least developed countries. However, we recognize that full implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access has yet to be achieved, and the least developed countries have not been able to meaningfully benefit from the global trading system due to restrictive market entry conditions and supply-side constraints. In this regard, we call upon the States members to:

(a) Realize the full and timely implementation of the decision to provide duty-free and quota-free market access, on a lasting basis, for all products originating from all least developed countries, which should be accomplished in a manner that does not diminish the existing market access enjoyed by any least developed country, adopt simple, transparent, and flexible preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from the least developed countries,¹⁰ resist protectionist

⁴ World Trade Organization, document WT/MIN(13)/44.

⁵ World Trade Organization, document WT/MIN(13)/42.

⁶ World Trade Organization, document WT/MIN(13)/43.

⁷ World Trade Organization, document WT/L/931.

⁸ World Trade Organization, document IP/C/64.

⁹ Communication dated 20 February 2015 from Bangladesh on behalf of the least developed country members to the Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (World Trade Organization, document IP/C/W/605).

¹⁰ World Trade Organization, document TN/C/W/63.

tendencies and rectify trade-distorting measures, including in agriculture, that are inconsistent with multilateral obligations;

(b) Address non-tariff measures and eliminate arbitrary or unjustified non-tariff barriers;

(c) Facilitate and accelerate negotiations with acceding least developed countries based on the accession guidelines adopted by the General Council of the World Trade Organization in December 2002 and the decision to further strengthen, streamline and operationalize the 2002 accession guidelines for least developed countries adopted by the General Council in July 2012;

31. We take note of the submission by the group of least developed countries of the World Trade Organization to receive special priority and preference in services sectors and modes of supply of export interest to the least developed countries.¹¹ We take note of the notifications made by some members of the World Trade Organization to the Council for Trade in Services of preferential measures to enhance least developed countries' participation in world services trade.¹² In this regard, we urge all other members of the World Trade Organization to do so and undertake measures to extend specific preferences to the services and service suppliers of least developed countries so that they could enhance their participation in services trade;

32. We also call upon donors to provide stronger support to the least developed countries to build their trade and supply-side capacity by providing at least 50 per cent share of the Aid for Trade. In this regard, we welcome the launch of the new phase of the Enhanced Integrated Framework for trade-related assistance for Least Developed Countries for 2016-2022 and call for enhanced and predictable resources in support of the needs and demands of the least developed countries expressed through their national development strategies, as agreed upon in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

33. We recognize that foreign direct investment constitutes a dominant part of private capital flows to the least developed countries and plays a complementary and catalytic role in building and strengthening productive capacity in these countries. The least developed countries have made strong efforts to attract increased foreign direct investment flows and enhance their benefits for their economies, which were complemented by actions by their development partners. These actions appear to have had a positive impact, as indicated by a significant rise in foreign direct investment flows to the least developed countries in recent years. We are however concerned that the total share of foreign direct investment to the least developed countries in global foreign direct investment remains only around 1.7 per cent, underscoring that much more needs to be done;

34. We stress that stronger and more focused policies, strategies and mechanisms by the least developed countries, home countries of foreign direct investment, international organizations and other stakeholders can substantially increase foreign direct investment flows to the least developed countries in the coming years. In this regard, we recall the decision contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action and reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 67/220 to adopt, expand and implement investment promotion regimes for the least developed

¹¹ World Trade Organization, document S/C/W/356.

¹² Available from www.wto.org/english/news_e/news15_e/serv_03aug15_e.htm.

countries. We welcome the decision contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries and the offer to provide financial and technical support for project preparation and contract negotiation, advisory support in investment-related dispute resolution, access to information on investment facilities and risk insurance and guarantees such as through the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency;

35. In this regard, we call upon Member States to undertake a decision at the seventieth session of the General Assembly to establish an international investment support centre for the least developed countries under the auspices of the United Nations to provide a one-stop arrangement to help stimulate foreign direct investment in the least developed countries, which can make available the following interrelated and mutually reinforcing services, as already agreed upon in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda:

- (a) An information depository for investment facilities in the least developed countries;
- (b) Technical support to assist the least developed countries in preparing project documents and negotiating complex large-scale contracts;
- (c) Advisory support in dispute resolution;
- (d) Risk insurance and guarantees in close collaboration with the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development;

36. We underline that the long-term framework of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals should not only ensure achieving the goals and targets, but needs to secure the sustainability of their achievements. We are concerned that the biggest part of the risks and uncertainties that could derail global human progress over the next decades relates to climate change and other severe shocks and crises. We note with concern that the spread of the Ebola virus disease in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu, a devastating earthquake in Nepal and widespread floods in Myanmar have wreaked havoc in the lives and livelihoods of these countries. We therefore want the establishment and operationalization of a crisis mitigation and resilience-building fund for the least developed countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcome document of the International Conference on Financing for Development;

37. Bringing about structural transformation in the economies of the least developed countries would require transfer, acquisition and upgrade of technologies, including new technologies and broadband, domestic capacity and a knowledge base. In this regard, we welcome the decision of the General Assembly¹³ with regard to a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the least developed countries. We welcome the feasibility study for a United Nations technology bank for the least developed countries and its recommendations undertaken by the High-level Panel on the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries. We also appreciate the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for its secretariat support extended to the High-level Panel and request it to continue its support in the operationalization

¹³ See General Assembly resolution 68/224.

of the technology bank. We call upon the Government of Turkey to continue its support to the technology bank and call upon other donor countries to make strong contributions to the technology bank by providing at least 0.1 per cent of their official development assistance to the technology bank for its effective functioning. In this regard, we commend the Government of Turkey for its generous offer to host the technology bank and to support the work of the High-level Panel. We request the Secretary-General to undertake all necessary measures to fully operationalize the technology bank during the seventieth session of the General Assembly, as recommended by the High-level Panel and in compliance with target 17.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals;

38. We underline that the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative have created additional fiscal space in many least developed countries. However, we are concerned that there are risks of re-indebtedness because of the huge development needs in the least developed countries, and it is a matter of deep concern that in spite of the Initiatives, many least developed countries still struggle with a high debt burden, with 12 of them at a high risk of debt distress¹⁴ and we call upon development partners to undertake effective measures to cancel all multilateral and bilateral debts owed by all least developed countries to creditors, both public and private, and to arrange debt standstill and debt swaps until the debt cancellation is fully realized. We also call upon creditors, both public and private, for additional effective measures to facilitate financing of our economic development, including access to both concessional and non-concessional resources for investment in critically needed infrastructure and development projects. We also underline the need for multilateral frameworks for sovereign debt restructuring and welcome the adoption of the resolution on the Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Process by the General Assembly on 10 September 2015;¹⁵

39. We stress that the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, including its targets and the recently held Sustainable Energy for All Forum will remain a useful framework in the field of energy for the decades ahead. In line with the least developed countries launch of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, held on 28 July 2014, in Cotonou, Benin, the least developed countries should receive a special focus throughout the decade. We call upon the development partners to support sustainable energy projects in the least developed countries with enhanced financial resources and technology transfer on special and preferential terms with a view to ensuring universal access to sustainable energy, especially in the least developed countries;

40. We stress that the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, including its targets and the recently held Sustainable Energy for All Forum will remain a useful framework in the field of energy for the decades ahead;

41. We underline that North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, is vital to the least developed countries, particularly in regard to technical assistance, sharing of best practices in terms of their development, especially in areas of productive capacity-building, infrastructure, energy, science and technology, trade, investment and transit transport cooperation, and we call upon the countries of the

¹⁴ See A/70/83-E/2015/75, para. 81.

¹⁵ General Assembly resolution 69/319.

South to further strengthen their support to the least developed countries in all of these areas in a predictable manner;

42. We welcome ongoing efforts to mobilize resources for the full operationalization of the South-South technology transfer facility for the least developed countries, launched in Cotonou in July 2014, as an integral part of the Member States' proposed global South-South expo and meeting centre;¹⁶

43. We recognize that the United Nations development system is challenged to meet the growing demands for more varied assistance by doing more, quicker and better. We invite all organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations, including the World Bank Group and international and regional financial institutions, to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action including by implementing scaled-up programmes of financial and technical cooperation, to integrate it into their programmes of work, participate fully in its review at the national, subregional, regional and global levels and include in their annual reports to the Executive Boards and to the Economic and Social Council the progress made in this regard, as mandated by the Council in paragraph 9 of its resolution 2013/46;

44. We welcome the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 69/231 on holding the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in Antalya, Turkey, for a period of three days in June 2016 and look forward to its successful outcome. We also welcome with deep appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Turkey to host the high-level conference on the midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries;

45. We underline that since the second half of the Istanbul Programme of Action implementation period coincides with the first five years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there should be strong synergy and coherence between the implementation of the two processes with a view to speedily realizing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, the midterm review should launch concrete and specific global initiatives and provide strong impetus to the realization of the existing initiatives, building on the decisions contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It should also provide guidance to review the least developed country criteria, taking into account the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals;

46. We recall the decision contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on the least developed countries, and underline the need for strong coordination and coherence in the follow-up of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Istanbul Programme of Action;

47. We reiterate our call to the international community, especially the United Nations system, to extend necessary support to the least developed countries

¹⁶ Letter of commitment signed in Macau on 26 August 2015.

in strengthening their national statistical capacities to develop their national databases that contain national and international data on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with related metadata that are available to all interested users. We request the Secretary-General to mobilize adequate resources for the least developed countries to enable them to actively participate in all review and follow-up activities at the national, regional and global levels;

48. We request the Office of the High Representative to extend necessary support to the least developed countries in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through coordination with various United Nations entities, raising global awareness, mobilizing international support and resources in favour of the least developed countries, building multi-stakeholder partnerships and reaching out to all stakeholders, including by establishing partnerships with civil society and the private sector, to enhance support for the three groups of countries;

49. We recall paragraph 26 of General Assembly resolution 67/220, which invites the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to include implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action as a standing item on the agenda of the Board, also recall the invitation of the General Assembly in its resolution 69/231 to the Secretary-General to convene a United Nations system high-level event during the comprehensive high-level midterm review, and in this connection invite the Secretary-General to organize a special meeting of the Board during the midterm review conference with a view to ensuring full mobilization of the United Nations system in support of the least developed countries and to ensure full and coordinated implementation by the system of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the midterm conference outcome, the post-2015 development agenda and the outcomes of all other international and regional conferences and processes as they relate to the least developed countries;

50. We consider that a Heads of State and Government level meeting of the least developed countries will be held during the midterm review conference in Antalya, Turkey;

51. We stress that the Office of the High Representative, as the focal point, in accordance with mandates given in General Assembly resolution 56/227 of 24 December 2001, should undertake the necessary preparations and mobilize and coordinate the active involvement of the organizations of the United Nations system;

52. We underscore the critical importance of the full and effective participation of the least developed countries in the comprehensive global midterm review of the Programme of Action and its preparatory process at the national, regional and global levels, stress that adequate resources should be provided, and in this regard we request the Secretary-General to mobilize extrabudgetary resources in order to cover the cost of participation of an adequate number of government representatives from each least developed country in the high-level midterm review;

53. We recall the ambitious goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action to enable half of the number of least developed countries to reach the stage of graduation by 2020 and commit to take the necessary steps to complete the graduation process. We underline that each instance of successful graduation will constitute an extraordinary success not only for the countries themselves, but also for the United Nations and for development cooperation by the international

community. We are encouraged that notwithstanding persisting challenges and constraints, several least developed countries have announced their intention to reach the status of graduation by or around 2020. Countries such as Angola, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal and Rwanda, among others, have set graduation as a goal in their national development strategies;

54. We recall paragraph 26 of General Assembly resolution 68/224, which requests all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative, to extend necessary support in a coordinated manner to the countries that have expressed their intention to reach the status of graduation by 2020 in preparing their graduation and transition strategy;

55. We invite the United Nations System organizations, led by the Office of the High Representative, to extend the necessary technical support to the countries aspiring to graduation in developing their graduation and smooth transition strategies. We call upon the development partners to support the implementation of the graduation strategy with a view to enabling them to graduate from the list within the stipulated time;

56. We call upon the Committee for Development Policy of the Economic and Social Council to continue to give due consideration to the specific geographical constraints and vulnerabilities of each least developed country, including small island and landlocked least developed countries, conflict and post-conflict least developed countries, least developed countries with mountains and fragile ecology, low-lying coastal least developed countries and those with extreme proneness to natural disasters, extreme dependency on primary commodity exports, low agricultural productivity and food insecurity, climate and environmental vulnerability and energy insecurity;

57. We welcome with appreciation the Cotonou agenda for productive capacity-building in the least developed countries, which was adopted at the ministerial conference, held in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, from 28 to 31 July 2014 on the theme "New partnerships for productive capacity-building in the least developed countries", and invite all stakeholders to take appropriate actions for the implementation and follow-up of the Cotonou agenda for productive capacity-building in the least developed countries, in particular the key initiatives;

58. We also welcome the Kathmandu declaration for the sustainable graduation of Asia-Pacific least developed countries, which was adopted at the ministerial meeting of Asia-Pacific least developed countries on graduation and the post-2015 development agenda, held from 16 to 18 December 2014 in Kathmandu and jointly hosted by the Government of Nepal and the Office of the High Representative, and the Milan declaration for the graduation of African least developed countries, adopted at the ministerial meeting, held in Milan, Italy, from 8 to 10 June 2015, to examine issues related to structural transformation, graduation and the post-2015 development agenda, which was jointly hosted by the Government of Italy and the Office of the High Representative. We invite all stakeholders to take appropriate actions for the implementation and follow-up of the outcomes of those ministerial meetings;

59. We most sincerely acknowledge the supportive role being played by the Group of Friends of Least Developed Countries and invite the Group to further strengthen its support to the effective realization of the Istanbul Programme of

Action, the midterm conference outcome, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcomes of all other international and regional conferences and processes as they relate to the least developed countries;

60. We express our deep appreciation to the Republic of Benin for its able chairmanship, tireless efforts and excellent leadership provided to the least developed countries in the past three years as the Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries and look forward to its continued support to the promotion of the interests of the least developed countries;

61. We warmly welcome the nomination by consensus of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to chair the Global Coordination Bureau for the next three years;

62. We recall annex II of the Ministerial Declaration of Least Developed Countries entitled "Decision on a coordination mechanism for the least developed countries, adopted at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 15 November 2001" (see A/C.2/56/5), and paragraph 44 of the Ministerial Declaration of 2012 and reaffirm that the chairmanship of the Bureau will rotate alternately between the African Group, including Haiti, and the Asian-Pacific Group, with the chairperson from the African Group undertaking the preparation of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the least developed countries to be held by the end of the current decade.

**General Assembly**

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Agenda item 18 (a)

**Macroeconomic policy questions: international trade
and development**

**Seventh United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects
of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles
and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices**

Note by the Secretariat

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 35/63 of 5 December 1980, adopted the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, requested the Trade and Development Board to establish an intergovernmental group of experts on restrictive business practices within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and decided to convene a United Nations conference to review all aspects of the Set in 1985. Since then, that conference has been convened every five years.
2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/142 of 20 December 2010, took note of the final report of the Sixth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, including the resolution adopted by the Conference (TD/RBP/CONF.7/11). In that resolution, the Conference invited UNCTAD to convene ad hoc expert group meetings on the interface between competition policy and consumer welfare. In those meetings, participants called for the revision of the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection, as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 39/248 of 9 April 1985 and later expanded to include sustainable consumption by the General Assembly in its decision 54/449 of 22 December 1999, on the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council through its resolution 1999/7 of 26 July 1999.
3. The positive consultations that ensued among Member States led to an agreed text that was submitted to the Seventh United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, which was held in Geneva from 6 to 10 July 2015. The Conference adopted by consensus a resolution in which it invited the General Assembly, at its seventieth session in 2015, to consider the adoption of



the draft resolution on consumer protection and the revised United Nations guidelines for consumer protection annexed thereto (see TD/RBP/CONF.8/11 and TD/RBP/CONF.8/11/Add.1 Rev.1), which are annexed to the present document. The Conference also requested the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD to take note of the draft resolution on consumer protection and the revised United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection. The Trade and Development Board, at the 1135th plenary meeting of its sixty-second session, on 18 September 2015, took note of the draft resolution on consumer protection for consideration by the Assembly and the revised United Nations guidelines for consumer protection (see TD/RBP/CONF.8/11/Add.1 Rev.1).

Annex

Draft resolution recommended by the Seventh United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices for consideration by the General Assembly

Consumer protection

The General Assembly,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1981/62 of 23 July 1981, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to continue consultations on consumer protection with a view to elaborating a set of general guidelines for consumer protection, taking particular account of the needs of the developing countries,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 38/147 of 19 December 1983 on consumer protection,

Noting Economic and Social Council resolutions 1984/63 of 26 July 1984 and 1999/7 of 26 July 1999 and General Assembly resolution 39/248 of 9 April 1985,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 65/142 of 20 December 2010 on international trade and development,

Taking note of the mandate entrusted to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its thirteenth session, held in Doha from 21 to 26 April 2012, to conduct analysis and research and help all Member States, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to formulate and implement competition and consumer protection policies, promote the sharing of best practices, and carry out peer reviews with regard to the implementation of such policies,¹

Recalling the objectives formulated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, notably the Millennium Development Goals, the reaffirmation these received in the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals in 2010, in particular in the pursuit of development and the eradication of poverty, and their upcoming revision into the Sustainable Development Goals,

Noting that this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection as a thematic issue and acknowledging the enduring need for Member States to further strengthen the protection of consumers, the General Assembly remains committed to addressing the impact of development on markets and technology on consumers,

Acknowledging that although significant progress has been achieved, with respect to the protection of consumers, at the normative level since the adoption of the guidelines in 1985, that progress has not been consistently translated into more

¹ See the addendum to the report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on its thirteenth session (TD/500/Add.1).

effective and better-coordinated protection efforts in all countries and across all areas of commerce.

Reaffirming the guidelines as a valuable set of principles for setting out the main characteristics of effective consumer protection legislation, enforcement institutions and redress systems, and for assisting interested Member States in formulating and enforcing domestic and regional laws, rules and regulations that are suitable to their own economic and social and environmental circumstances, as well as promoting international enforcement cooperation among Member States and encouraging the sharing of experiences in protecting consumers,

Recognizing that, despite the diversity of mechanisms and legal cultures that exist across Member States, consensus exists on the need for common principles that establish the main characteristics of effective consumer protection legislation, enforcement institutions and redress systems,

Believing that a robust legal and regulatory framework for consumer protection, including effective dispute resolution and redress mechanisms and the ability of consumer protection enforcement authorities to cooperate in obtaining redress, where available, across borders for consumers harmed by fraudulent and deceptive commercial practices, serves an important public interest; contributing to economic dynamism and consumer welfare,

Recognizing that Member States have a common interest in promoting and protecting consumer privacy and the global free flow of information,

Considering that electronic commerce, which should be understood to include mobile commerce, has become increasingly relevant to consumers worldwide and that the opportunities it offers should be harnessed to help facilitate economic development and growth based on emerging network technologies with computers, mobile phones, and connected devices that promote consumer welfare,

Considering that Member States, businesses, consumers and their representatives should devote special attention to the development of effective consumer protection in electronic commerce and that certain consumer protection issues, such as applicable law and jurisdiction, may be addressed most effectively through international consultation and cooperation,

Recognizing that consumer confidence and trust in a well-functioning market for financial services promotes financial stability, growth, efficiency and innovation over the long term and that the recent financial crisis places a renewed focus on consumer protection calling for effective regulatory, supervisory and enforcement frameworks in the financial sector to contribute to the welfare of consumers,

Recognizing the importance of combating substandard, falsely labelled, and counterfeit products that pose threats to the health and safety of consumers and to the environment, and also decrease consumer confidence in the marketplace,

Recognizing the value of coordination and partnership with established multilateral organizations that focus on consumer protection in order to maximize the benefits to consumers and avoid duplicating efforts,

Recalling the proposal of the Seventh United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices,

1. *Decides* to adopt the revised United Nations guidelines for consumer protection annexed to the present resolution, of which they form an integral part;
2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to disseminate the guidelines to Member States and other interested parties;
3. *Requests* all organizations of the United Nations system that elaborate guidelines and related documents on specific areas relevant to consumer protection to distribute them to the appropriate bodies of individual States;
4. *Recommends* that Member States implement the present resolution and the guidelines as set out in the annex;
5. *Requests* the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to exchange information on progress and experiences regarding the implementation of the present resolution, review that information and report to the General Assembly on this subject on the occasion of the Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices;
6. *Requests* the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to promote the guidelines and to encourage interested Member States to create awareness of the many ways in which Member States, businesses and civil society can promote consumer protection in the provision of public and private goods and services;
7. *Decides* to establish an intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy within the framework of an existing commission of the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which will operate until the Ninth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, at which its work will be reviewed and the renewal of its mandate considered;
8. *Decides* that the necessary resources should be made available within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to carry out the tasks embodied in the revised guidelines through the reallocation of existing resources and/or the use of extrabudgetary resources from voluntary contributions;
9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote effective implementation of the guidelines by Member States, businesses and civil society.

Annex

Guidelines for consumer protection

I. Objectives

1. Taking into account the interests and needs of consumers in all Member States, particularly in developing ones; recognizing that consumers often face imbalances in economic terms, educational levels and bargaining power and bearing in mind that consumers should have the right of access to non-hazardous products, as well as the right to promote just, equitable and sustainable economic and social development and environmental protection, these guidelines for consumer protection have the following objectives:

- (a) To assist countries in achieving or maintaining adequate protection for their population as consumers;
- (b) To facilitate production and distribution patterns responsive to the needs and desires of consumers;
- (c) To encourage high levels of ethical conduct for those engaged in the production and distribution of goods and services to consumers;
- (d) To assist countries in curbing abusive business practices by all enterprises at the national and international levels which adversely affect consumers;
- (e) To facilitate the development of independent consumer groups;
- (f) To further international cooperation in the field of consumer protection;
- (g) To encourage the development of market conditions which provide consumers with greater choice at lower prices;
- (h) To promote sustainable consumption.

II. Scope of application

2. These guidelines apply to business-to-consumer transactions, including the provision of goods and services by State-owned enterprises to consumers. For the purpose of these guidelines, consumer protection policies include the laws, regulations, rules, frameworks, procedures, decisions, mechanisms, and programmes of Member States, as well as private sector standards and recommendations that protect consumer rights and interests and promote consumer welfare.

3. For the purpose of these guidelines, the term "consumer" generally refers to a natural person, regardless of nationality, acting primarily for personal, family or household purposes, while recognizing that Member States may adopt differing definitions to address specific domestic needs.

III. General principles

4. Member States should develop, strengthen or maintain a strong consumer protection policy, taking into account the guidelines set out below and relevant international agreements. In so doing, each Member State must set its own priorities for the protection of consumers in accordance with the economic, social and environmental circumstances of the country and the needs of its population, and bearing in mind the costs and benefits of proposed measures.
5. The legitimate needs which the guidelines are intended to meet are the following:
 - (a) Access by consumers to essential goods and services;
 - (b) The protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers;
 - (c) The protection of consumers from hazards to their health and safety;
 - (d) The promotion and protection of the economic interests of consumers;
 - (e) Access by consumers to adequate information to enable them to make informed choices according to individual wishes and needs;
 - (f) Consumer education, including education on the environmental, social and economic consequences of consumer choice;
 - (g) Availability of effective consumer dispute resolution and redress;
 - (h) Freedom to form consumer and other relevant groups or organizations and the opportunity of such organizations to present their views in decision-making processes affecting them;
 - (i) The promotion of sustainable consumption patterns;
 - (j) A level of protection for consumers using electronic commerce that is not less than that afforded in other forms of commerce;
 - (k) The protection of consumer privacy and the global free flow of information.
6. Unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in industrialized countries, are the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment. All Member States should strive to promote sustainable consumption patterns; developed countries should take the lead in achieving sustainable consumption patterns; developing countries should seek to achieve sustainable consumption patterns in their development process, having due regard to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The special situation and needs of developing countries in this regard should be fully taken into account.
7. Policies for promoting sustainable consumption should take into account the goals of eradicating poverty, satisfying the basic human needs of all members of society, and reducing inequality within and between countries.
8. Member States should provide or maintain adequate infrastructure to develop, implement and monitor consumer protection policies. Special care should be taken to ensure that measures for consumer protection are implemented for the benefit of all sectors of the population, particularly the rural population and people living in poverty.

9. All enterprises should obey the relevant laws and regulations of the countries in which they do business. They should also conform to the appropriate provisions of international standards for consumer protection to which the competent authorities of the country in question have agreed. (Hereinafter references to international standards in the guidelines should be viewed in the context of this paragraph.)

10. The potential positive role of universities and public and private enterprises in research should be considered when developing consumer protection policies.

IV. Principles for good business practices

11. The principles that establish benchmarks for good business practices for conducting online and off-line commercial activities with consumers are as follows:

(a) **Fair and equitable treatment.** Businesses should deal fairly and honestly with consumers at all stages of their relationship, so that it is an integral part of the business culture. Businesses should avoid practices that harm consumers, particularly with respect to vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers;

(b) **Commercial behaviour.** Businesses should not subject consumers to illegal, unethical, discriminatory or deceptive practices, such as abusive marketing tactics, abusive debt collection, or other improper behaviour that may pose unnecessary risks or harm consumers. Businesses and their authorized agents should have due regard for the interests of consumers and responsibility for upholding consumer protection as an objective;

(c) **Disclosure and transparency.** Businesses should provide complete, accurate and not misleading information regarding the goods and services, terms, conditions, applicable fees and final costs to enable consumers to take informed decisions. Businesses should ensure easy access to this information, especially to the key terms and conditions, regardless of the means of technology used;

(d) **Education and awareness-raising.** Businesses should, as appropriate, develop programmes and mechanisms to assist consumers to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand risks, including financial risks, to take informed decisions and to access competent and professional advice and assistance, preferably from an independent third party, when needed;

(e) **Protection of privacy.** Businesses should protect consumers' privacy through a combination of appropriate control, security, transparency and consent mechanisms relating to the collection and use of their personal data;

(f) **Consumer complaints and disputes.** Businesses should make available complaints-handling mechanisms that provide consumers with expeditious, fair, transparent, inexpensive, accessible, speedy and effective dispute resolution without unnecessary cost or burden. Businesses should consider subscribing to domestic and international standards, pertaining to internal complaints handling, alternative dispute resolution services and customer satisfaction codes.

V. Guidelines

12. The following guidelines should apply both to home-produced goods and services and to imports.

13. In applying any procedures or regulations for consumer protection, due regard should be given to ensuring that they do not become barriers to international trade and that they are consistent with international trade obligations.

A. National policies for consumer protection

14. Member States should establish consumer protection policies that encourage:

- (a) Good business practices;
- (b) Clear and timely information to enable consumers to contact businesses easily, and to enable regulatory and law enforcement authorities to identify and locate them. This may include information such as the identity of the business, its legal name and the name under which it trades, its principal geographic address, website and e-mail address or other means of contact, its telephone number and its government registration or licence numbers;
- (c) Clear and timely information regarding the goods or services offered by businesses and the terms and conditions of the relevant transaction;
- (d) Clear, concise and easy to understand contract terms that are not unfair;
- (e) A transparent process for the confirmation, cancellation, return and refund of transactions;
- (f) Secure payment mechanisms;
- (g) Fair, affordable and speedy dispute resolution and redress;
- (h) Consumer privacy and data security;
- (i) Consumer and business education.

15. Member States should work towards ensuring that consumer protection enforcement agencies have the necessary human and financial resources to promote effective compliance and to obtain or facilitate redress for consumers in appropriate cases.

B. Physical safety

16. Member States should adopt or encourage the adoption of appropriate measures, including legal systems, safety regulations, national or international standards, voluntary standards and the maintenance of safety records to ensure that products are safe for either intended or normally foreseeable use.

17. Appropriate policies should ensure that goods produced by manufacturers are safe for either intended or normally foreseeable use. Those responsible for bringing goods to the market, in particular suppliers, exporters, importers, retailers and the like (hereinafter referred to as "distributors"), should ensure that while in their care these goods are not rendered unsafe through improper handling or storage and that

while in their care they do not become hazardous through improper handling or storage. Consumers should be instructed in the proper use of goods and should be informed of the risks involved in intended or normally foreseeable use. Vital safety information should be conveyed to consumers by internationally understandable symbols wherever possible.

18. Appropriate policies should ensure that if manufacturers or distributors become aware of unforeseen hazards after products are placed on the market, they should notify the relevant authorities and, as appropriate, the public without delay. Member States should also consider ways of ensuring that consumers are properly informed of such hazards.

19. Member States should, where appropriate, adopt policies under which, if a product is found to be seriously defective and/or to constitute a substantial and severe hazard even when properly used, manufacturers and/or distributors should recall it and replace or modify it, or substitute another product for it. If it is not possible to do this within a reasonable period of time, the consumer should be adequately compensated.

C. Promotion and protection of the economic interests of consumers

20. Member States should seek to enable consumers to obtain optimum benefit from their economic resources. They should also seek to achieve the goals of satisfactory production and performance standards, adequate distribution methods, fair business practices, informative marketing and effective protection against practices which could adversely affect the economic interests of consumers and the exercise of choice in the marketplace.

21. Member States should intensify their efforts to prevent practices which are damaging to the economic interests of consumers through ensuring that manufacturers, distributors and others involved in the provision of goods and services adhere to established laws and mandatory standards. Consumer organizations should be encouraged to monitor adverse practices, such as the adulteration of foods, false or misleading claims in marketing and service frauds.

22. Member States should develop, strengthen or maintain, as the case may be, measures relating to the control of restrictive and other abusive business practices which may be harmful to consumers, including means for the enforcement of such measures. In this connection, Member States should be guided by their commitment to the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 35/63 of 5 December 1980.

23. Member States should adopt or maintain policies that make clear the responsibility of the producer to ensure that goods meet reasonable demands of durability, utility and reliability, and are suited to the purpose for which they are intended, and that the seller should see that these requirements are met. Similar policies should apply to the provision of services.

24. Member States should encourage fair and effective competition in order to provide consumers with the greatest range of choice among products and services at the lowest cost. Member States should ensure that their consumer protection policies are not used to protect domestic businesses from competition or applied unfairly.

25. Member States should, where appropriate, see to it that manufacturers and/or retailers ensure adequate availability of reliable after-sales service and spare parts.
26. Consumers should be protected from such contractual abuses as one-sided standard contracts, exclusion of essential rights in contracts and unconscionable conditions of credit by sellers.
27. Promotional marketing and sales practices should be guided by the principle of fair treatment of consumers and should meet legal requirements. This requires the provision of the information necessary to enable consumers to take informed and independent decisions, as well as measures to ensure that the information provided is accurate.
28. Member States should encourage all concerned to participate in the free flow of accurate information on all aspects of consumer products.
29. Consumer access to accurate information about the environmental impact of products and services should be encouraged through such means as product profiles, environmental reports by industry, information centres for consumers, voluntary and transparent eco-labelling programmes and product information hotlines.
30. Member States, in close collaboration with manufacturers, distributors and consumer organizations, should take measures regarding misleading environmental claims or information in advertising and other marketing activities. The development of appropriate advertising codes and standards for the regulation and verification of environmental claims should be encouraged.
31. Member States should, within their own national context, encourage the formulation and implementation by businesses, in cooperation with consumer organizations, of codes of marketing and other business practices to ensure adequate consumer protection. Voluntary agreements may also be established jointly by business, consumer organizations and other interested parties. These codes should receive adequate publicity.
32. Member States should regularly review legislation pertaining to weights and measures and assess the adequacy of the machinery for its enforcement.

D. Standards for the safety and quality of consumer goods and services

33. Member States should, as appropriate, formulate or promote the elaboration and implementation of standards, voluntary and other, at the national and international levels for the safety and quality of goods and services and give them appropriate publicity. National standards and regulations for product safety and quality should be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that they conform, where possible, to generally accepted international standards.
34. Where a standard lower than the generally accepted international standard is being applied because of local economic conditions, every effort should be made to raise that standard as soon as possible.
35. Member States should encourage and ensure the availability of facilities to test and certify the safety, quality and performance of essential consumer goods and services.

E. Distribution facilities for essential consumer goods and services

36. Member States should, where appropriate, consider:

(a) Adopting or maintaining policies to ensure the efficient distribution of goods and services to consumers; where appropriate, specific policies should be considered to ensure the distribution of essential goods and services where this distribution is endangered, as could be the case particularly in rural areas. Such policies could include assistance for the creation of adequate storage and retail facilities in rural centres, incentives for consumer self-help and better control of the conditions under which essential goods and services are provided in rural areas;

(b) Encouraging the establishment of consumer cooperatives and related trading activities, as well as providing information about them, especially in rural areas.

F. Dispute resolution and redress

37. Member States should encourage the development of fair, effective, transparent and impartial mechanisms to address consumer complaints through administrative, judicial and alternative dispute resolution, including for cross-border cases. Member States should establish or maintain legal and/or administrative measures to enable consumers or, as appropriate, relevant organizations to obtain redress through formal or informal procedures that are expeditious, fair, transparent, inexpensive and accessible. Such procedures should take particular account of the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers. Member States should provide consumers with access to remedies that do not impose a cost, delay, or undue burden on the economic value at stake and at the same time do not impose excessive or undue burdens on society and businesses.

38. Member States should encourage all businesses to resolve consumer disputes in an expeditious, fair, transparent, inexpensive, accessible and informal manner, and to establish voluntary mechanisms, including advisory services and informal complaints procedures, which can provide assistance to consumers.

39. Information on available redress and other dispute-resolving procedures should be made available to consumers. Access to dispute resolution and redress mechanisms, including alternative dispute resolution, should be enhanced, particularly in cross-border disputes.

40. Member States should ensure that collective resolution procedures are expeditious, transparent, fair, inexpensive and accessible to both consumers and businesses, including those pertaining to over-indebtedness and bankruptcy cases.

41. Member States should cooperate with businesses and consumer groups in furthering consumer and business understanding of how to avoid disputes, of dispute resolution and redress mechanisms available to consumers, and of where consumers can file complaints.

G. Education and information programmes

42. Member States should develop or encourage the development of general consumer education and information programmes, including information on the environmental impacts of consumer choices and behaviour and the possible implications, including benefits and costs, of changes in consumption, bearing in mind the cultural traditions of the people concerned. The aim of such programmes should be to enable people to act as discriminating consumers, capable of making an informed choice of goods and services, and conscious of their rights and responsibilities. In developing such programmes, special attention should be given to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers, in both rural and urban areas, including low-income consumers and those with low or non-existent literacy levels. Consumer groups, business and other relevant organizations of civil society should be involved in these educational efforts.

43. Consumer education should, where appropriate, become an integral part of the basic curriculum of the educational system, preferably as a component of existing subjects.

44. Consumer education and information programmes should cover such important aspects of consumer protection as the following:

- (a) Health, nutrition, prevention of food-borne diseases and food adulteration;
- (b) Product hazards;
- (c) Product labelling;
- (d) Relevant legislation, how to access dispute resolution mechanisms and obtain redress, and agencies and organizations for consumer protection;
- (e) Information on weights and measures, prices, quality, credit conditions and availability of basic necessities;
- (f) Environmental protection;
- (g) Electronic commerce;
- (h) Financial services;
- (i) Efficient use of materials, energy and water.

45. Member States should encourage consumer organizations and other interested groups, including the media, to undertake education and information programmes, including on the environmental impacts of consumption patterns and on the possible implications, including benefits and costs, of changes in consumption, particularly for the benefit of low-income consumer groups in rural and urban areas.

46. Business should, where appropriate, undertake or participate in factual and relevant consumer education and information programmes.

47. Bearing in mind the need to reach rural consumers and illiterate consumers, Member States should, as appropriate, develop or encourage the development of consumer information programmes in the mass media, or through other delivery channels that reach such consumers.

48. Member States should organize or encourage training programmes for educators, mass media professionals and consumer advisers, to enable them to participate in carrying out consumer information and education programmes.

H. Promotion of sustainable consumption

49. Sustainable consumption includes meeting the needs of present and future generations for goods and services in ways that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

50. Responsibility for sustainable consumption is shared by all members and organizations of society, with informed consumers, Member States, business, labour organizations, and consumer and environmental organizations playing particularly important roles. Informed consumers have an essential role in promoting consumption that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, including through the effects of their choices on producers. Member States should promote the development and implementation of policies for sustainable consumption and the integration of those policies with other public policies. Policy-making by Member States should be conducted in consultation with business, consumer and environmental organizations and other concerned groups. Business has a responsibility for promoting sustainable consumption through the design, production and distribution of goods and services. Consumer and environmental organizations have a responsibility for promoting public participation and debate on sustainable consumption, for informing consumers, and for working with Member States and business towards sustainable consumption.

51. Member States, in partnership with business and relevant organizations of civil society, should develop and implement strategies that promote sustainable consumption through a mix of policies that could include regulations; economic and social instruments; sectoral policies in such areas as land use, transport, energy and housing; information programmes to raise awareness of the impact of consumption patterns; removal of subsidies that promote unsustainable patterns of consumption and production; and promotion of sector-specific best practices in environmental management.

52. Member States should encourage the design, development and use of products and services that are safe and energy- and resource-efficient, considering their full lifecycle impacts. Member States should encourage recycling programmes that encourage consumers to both recycle wastes and purchase recycled products.

53. Member States should promote the development and use of national and international environmental health and safety standards for products and services; such standards should not result in disguised barriers to trade.

54. Member States should encourage impartial environmental testing of products.

55. Member States should safely manage environmentally harmful uses of substances and encourage the development of environmentally sound alternatives for such uses. New potentially hazardous substances should be evaluated on a scientific basis for their long-term environmental impact prior to distribution.

56. Member States should promote awareness of the health-related benefits of sustainable consumption and production patterns, bearing in mind both direct effects on individual health and collective effects through environmental protection.

57. Member States, in partnership with the private sector and other relevant organizations, should encourage the transformation of unsustainable consumption patterns through the development and use of new environmentally sound products and services and new technologies, including information and communication technologies that can meet consumer needs while reducing pollution and depletion of natural resources.

58. Member States are encouraged to create or strengthen effective regulatory mechanisms for the protection of consumers, including aspects of sustainable consumption.

59. Member States should consider a range of economic instruments, such as fiscal instruments and internalization of environmental costs, to promote sustainable consumption, taking into account social needs, the need for disincentives for unsustainable practices and incentives for more sustainable practices, while avoiding potential negative effects for market access, in particular for developing countries.

60. Member States, in cooperation with business and other relevant groups, should develop indicators, methodologies and databases for measuring progress towards sustainable consumption at all levels. That information should be publicly available.

61. Member States and international agencies should take the lead in introducing sustainable practices in their own operations, in particular through their procurement policies. Member State procurement, as appropriate, should encourage the development and use of environmentally sound products and services.

62. Member States and other relevant organizations should promote research on consumer behaviour related to environmental damage, in order to identify ways to make consumption patterns more sustainable.

I. Electronic commerce

63. Member States should work towards enhancing consumer confidence in electronic commerce by the continued development of transparent and effective consumer protection policies, ensuring a level of protection that is not less than that afforded in other forms of commerce.

64. Member States should, where appropriate, review existing consumer protection policies, to accommodate the special features of electronic commerce and ensure that consumers and businesses are informed and aware of their rights and obligations in the digital marketplace.

65. Member States may wish to consider the relevant international guidelines and standards on electronic commerce and the revisions thereof, and, where appropriate, adapt those guidelines and standards to their economic, social and environmental circumstances so they can adhere to them, as well as collaborate with other Member States in their implementation across borders. In so doing, Member States may wish to study the Guidelines for Consumer Protection in the Context of Electronic Commerce of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

J. Financial services

66. Member States should establish or encourage, as appropriate:

- (a) Financial consumer protection regulatory and enforcement policies;
- (b) Oversight bodies with the necessary authority and resources to carry out their mission;
- (c) Appropriate controls and insurance mechanisms to protect consumer assets, including deposits;
- (d) Improved financial education strategies that promote financial literacy;
- (e) Fair treatment and proper disclosure, ensuring that financial institutions are also responsible and accountable for the actions of their authorized agents. Financial services providers should have a written policy on conflict of interest to help detect potential conflicts of interest. When the possibility of a conflict of interest arises between the provider and a third party, that should be disclosed to the consumer to ensure that potential consumer detriment generated by conflict of interest be avoided;
- (f) Responsible business conduct by financial services providers and authorized agents, including responsible lending and the sale of products that are suitable to the consumer's needs and means;
- (g) Appropriate controls to protect consumer financial data, including from fraud and abuse;
- (h) A regulatory framework that promotes cost efficiency and transparency for remittances, such that consumers are provided with clear information on the price and delivery of the funds to be transferred, exchange rates, all fees and any other costs associated with the money transfers offered, as well as remedies if transfers fail.

67. Member States should adopt measures to reinforce and integrate consumer policies concerning financial inclusion, financial education and the protection of consumers in accessing and using financial services.

68. Member States may wish to consider relevant international guidelines and standards on financial services and the revisions thereof, and, where appropriate, adapt those guidelines and standards to their economic, social and environmental circumstances so they can adhere to them, as well as collaborate with other Member States in their implementation across borders. In so doing, Member States may wish to study the High-level Principles on Financial Consumer Protection of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Group of 20, as well as the Principles for Innovative Financial Inclusion of the Group of 20 and the Good Practices for Financial Consumer Protection of the World Bank.

K. Measures relating to specific areas

69. In advancing consumer interests, particularly in developing countries, Member States should, where appropriate, give priority to areas of essential concern for the health of the consumer, such as food, water, pharmaceuticals, energy and public utilities, and also address the specificities of tourism. Policies should be adopted or

maintained for product quality control, adequate and secure distribution facilities, standardized international labelling and information, and education and research programmes in these areas. Member State guidelines in regard to specific areas should be developed in the context of the provisions of the present document.

70. **Food.** When formulating national policies and plans with regard to food, Member States should take into account the need of all consumers for food security and should support and, as far as possible, adopt standards from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization Codex Alimentarius or, in their absence, other generally accepted international food standards. Member States should maintain, develop or improve food safety measures, including, inter alia, safety criteria, food standards and dietary requirements and effective monitoring, inspection and evaluation mechanisms.

71. Member States should promote sustainable agricultural policies and practices, conservation of biodiversity and protection of soil and water, taking into account traditional knowledge.

72. **Water.** Member States should, within the goals and targets set for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, formulate, maintain or strengthen national policies to improve the supply, distribution and quality of water for drinking. Due regard should be paid to the choice of appropriate levels of service, quality and technology, the need for education programmes and the importance of community participation.

73. Member States should assign high priority to the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes concerning the multiple uses of water, taking into account the importance of water for sustainable development in general and its finite character as a resource.

74. **Pharmaceuticals.** Member States should develop or maintain adequate standards, provisions and appropriate regulatory systems for ensuring the quality and appropriate use of pharmaceuticals through integrated national drug policies which could address, inter alia, procurement, distribution, production, licensing arrangements, registration systems and the availability of reliable information on pharmaceuticals. In so doing, Member States should take special account of the work and recommendations of the World Health Organization on pharmaceuticals. For relevant products, the use of that organization's Certification Scheme on the Quality of Pharmaceutical Products Moving in International Commerce and other international information systems on pharmaceuticals should be encouraged. Measures should also be taken, as appropriate, to promote the use of international non-proprietary names for drugs, drawing on the work done by the World Health Organization.

75. In addition to the priority areas indicated above, Member States should adopt appropriate measures in other areas, such as pesticides and chemicals in regard, where relevant, to their use, production and storage, taking into account such relevant health and environmental information as Member States may require producers to provide and include in the labelling of products.

76. **Energy.** Member States should promote universal access to clean energy and formulate, maintain or strengthen national policies to improve the supply, distribution and quality of affordable energy to consumers according to their economic circumstances. Consideration should be given to the choice of appropriate

levels of service, quality and technology, regulatory oversight, the need for awareness-raising programmes and the importance of community participation.

77. **Public utilities.** Member States should promote universal access to public utilities and formulate, maintain or strengthen national policies to improve rules and statutes dealing with provision of service, consumer information, security deposits and advance payment for service, late payment fees, termination and restoration of service, establishment of payment plans and dispute resolution between consumers and utility service providers, taking into account the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers.

78. **Tourism.** Member States should ensure that their consumer protection policies are adequate to address the marketing and provision of goods and services related to tourism, including, but not limited to, travel, traveller accommodation and timeshares. Member States should, in particular, address the cross-border challenges raised by such activity, including enforcement cooperation and information-sharing with other Member States, and should also cooperate with the relevant stakeholders in the tourism-travel sector.

VI. International cooperation

79. Member States should, especially in a regional or subregional context:

(a) Develop, review, maintain or strengthen, as appropriate, mechanisms for the exchange of information on national policies and measures in the field of consumer protection;

(b) Cooperate or encourage cooperation in the implementation of consumer protection policies to achieve greater results within existing resources. Examples of such cooperation could be collaboration in the setting up or joint use of testing facilities, common testing procedures, exchange of consumer information and education programmes, joint training programmes and joint elaboration of regulations;

(c) Cooperate to improve the conditions under which essential goods are offered to consumers, giving due regard to both price and quality. Such cooperation could include joint procurement of essential goods, exchange of information on different procurement possibilities and agreements on regional product specification.

80. Member States should develop or strengthen information links regarding products which have been banned, withdrawn or severely restricted in order to enable other importing countries to protect themselves adequately against the harmful effects of such products.

81. Member States should work to ensure that the quality of products and the information relating to such products does not vary from country to country in a way that would have detrimental effects on consumers.

82. Member States should improve their ability to cooperate in combating fraudulent and deceptive cross-border commercial practices, as that serves an important public interest, recognizing that cooperation on particular investigations or cases under these guidelines remains within the discretion of the consumer protection enforcement agency that is asked to cooperate.

83. The consumer protection enforcement agencies of Member States should coordinate investigations and enforcement activities to avoid interference with the investigations and enforcement activities of consumer protection enforcement agencies taking place in other jurisdictions.

84. The consumer protection enforcement agencies of Member States should make every effort to resolve disagreements that may arise regarding cooperation.

85. Member States and their consumer protection enforcement agencies should make use of existing international networks and enter into appropriate bilateral and multilateral arrangements and other initiatives to implement these guidelines.

86. Member States should enable their consumer protection policy agencies, in consultation with consumer protection enforcement agencies, to take a leading role in developing the framework for combating fraudulent and deceptive commercial practices, as set out in these guidelines.

87. Member States are invited to designate a consumer protection enforcement agency or a consumer protection policy agency to act as a contact point to facilitate cooperation under these guidelines. Those designations are intended to complement and not replace other means of cooperation. Such designations should be notified to the Secretary-General.

88. Member States should provide their consumer protection enforcement agencies with the authority to investigate, pursue, obtain and, where appropriate, share relevant information and evidence, particularly on matters relating to cross-border fraudulent and deceptive commercial practices affecting consumers. That authority should extend to cooperation with foreign consumer protection enforcement agencies and other appropriate foreign counterparts.

89. Member States should consider participating in multilateral and bilateral arrangements to improve international judicial and inter-agency cooperation in the recovery of foreign assets and the enforcement of decisions in cross-border cases.

90. Member States may wish to consider relevant international guidelines and standards on protecting consumers from fraudulent and deceptive cross-border commercial practices, in considering the legal authority to provide to their consumer protection enforcement agencies, and, where appropriate, adapt those guidelines and standards to their circumstances. In so doing, Member States may wish to study the Guidelines for Protecting Consumers from Fraudulent and Deceptive Commercial Practices across Borders of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

91. To promote sustainable consumption, Member States, international bodies and business should work together to develop, transfer and disseminate environmentally sound technologies, including through appropriate financial support from developed countries, and to devise new and innovative mechanisms for financing their transfer among all countries, in particular to and among developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

92. Member States and international organizations, as appropriate, should promote and facilitate capacity-building in the area of sustainable consumption, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In particular, Member States should also facilitate cooperation among consumer groups and other relevant organizations of civil society, with the aim of strengthening capacity in this area.

93. Member States and international bodies, as appropriate, should promote programmes relating to consumer education and information.

94. Member States should work to ensure that policies and measures for consumer protection are implemented with due regard to their not becoming barriers to international trade and that they are consistent with international trade obligations.

VII. International institutional machinery

A. Institutional arrangements

95. An intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy, operating within the framework of an existing commission of the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, will provide the institutional machinery.

96. Member States should take appropriate steps at the national or regional levels to implement these guidelines.

B. Functions of the intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy

97. The intergovernmental group of experts on consumer protection law and policy shall have the following functions:

(a) To provide an annual forum and modalities for multilateral consultations, discussion and exchange of views between Member States on matters related to the guidelines, in particular their implementation and the experience arising therefrom;

(b) To undertake studies and research periodically on consumer protection issues related to the guidelines based on a consensus and the interests of Member States and disseminate them with a view to increasing the exchange of experience and giving greater effectiveness to the guidelines;

(c) To conduct voluntary peer reviews of national consumer protection policies of Member States, as implemented by consumer protection authorities;

(d) To collect and disseminate information on matters relating to the overall attainment of the goals of the guidelines and to the appropriate steps Member States have taken at the national or regional levels to promote effective implementation of their objectives and principles;

(e) To provide capacity-building and technical assistance to developing countries and economies in transition in formulating and enforcing consumer protection laws and policies;

(f) To consider relevant studies, documentation and reports from relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations and networks, to exchange information on work programmes and topics for consultations, and to identify work-sharing projects and cooperation in the provision of technical assistance;

(g) To make appropriate reports and recommendations on the consumer protection policies of Member States, including the application and implementation of these guidelines;

(h) To operate between and report to the United Nations Conferences to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices;

(i) To conduct a periodic review of the guidelines, when mandated by the United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices;

(j) To establish such procedures and methods of work as may be necessary to carry out its mandate.

98. In the performance of its functions, neither the intergovernmental group nor its subsidiary organs shall pass judgement on the activities or conduct of individual Member States or of individual enterprises in connection with a specific business transaction. The intergovernmental group or its subsidiary organs should avoid becoming involved when enterprises to a specific business transaction are in dispute.

99. The Intergovernmental Group shall establish such procedures as may be necessary to deal with issues related to confidentiality.

**General Assembly**

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Agenda item 20
Sustainable development

**Letter dated 8 October 2015 from the Secretary-General of the
World Tourism Organization addressed to the Chair of the
Second Committee**

I have the honour to refer to resolution A/RES/653 (XXI), adopted by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) at its twenty-first session, held in Medellin, Colombia, from 12 to 17 September 2015, *inter alia*, acknowledging with appreciation the initiative of Samoa, together with several other delegations, for the General Assembly of the United Nations to proclaim 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.**

The recommendation by the General Assembly of UNWTO is made in view of the fact that international tourism is an increasingly significant component of international trade, as evident in export earnings from international tourism and passenger transport, which reached \$1.5 trillion in 2014. International tourism (travel and passenger transport) represents 30 per cent of the world's exports of services and 6 per cent of overall exports of goods and services. As a worldwide export category, tourism ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and food, and in many developing countries it ranks first. International tourist arrivals have also consistently shown an increase in all the regions, including an overall increase of 4.4 per cent in 2014, reaching a total of 1,135 million, up from 1,087 million in 2013, and proving the sector's capacity to stimulate economic growth, boost exports and create jobs. The objectives of the proposal are to:

- Increase awareness among public and private stakeholders, in particular tourists themselves, about their participatory role in harnessing the contribution of tourism to sustainable development and peace
- Provide for a better understanding of sustainable tourism and its contributions to economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability in both developing and developed countries

* Reissued for technical reasons on 22 October 2015.

** Available at: http://dtx4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/a21_res_final_en_0.pdf, p. 31; see also http://dtx4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/a21_0S_i_c_unwto_in_the_united_nations_system_add_1_en_0.pdf.



- Promote policies and business practices that advance the contribution of tourism to the implementation of relevant sustainable development goals

May I also bring to your kind attention the fact that, pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Agreement between the United Nations and UNWTO, as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and set forth in the annex to its resolution 58/232 of 23 December 2003, written statements presented by UNWTO shall be distributed by the Secretariat of the United Nations to the members of the Main Committees and other organs of the Assembly. Based on the foregoing, I would be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated as a document of the Second Committee under agenda item 20, entitled "Sustainable development".

(Signed) Taleb Rifai
